

Lake Perris

State Recreation Area

Boaters, picnickers, campers, and fishermen flock to enjoy the sparkling waters of Lake Perris today, but can hardly imagine all the changes that have occurred here. Two hundred years ago, for example, when the first overland immigrants from Mexico passed through this area under the leadership of Captain Juan Bautista de Anza, they saw a fertile valley, well watered by springs and even a small river that ran into San Jacinto Lake. Now, the river has been diverted, the lake is dry, and several of the springs have disappeared.

Indians who lived in this area before American settlement found a wide variety of foodstuffs here: acorns, mesquite, screw beans, seeds, wild fruits and berries, roots, and greens. They hunted deer, antelope, mountain sheep, raccoons, rabbits, birds, and other animals. They enjoyed games, contests of skill, and music. Tradition was their ruling authority, and old people were venerated as teachers of skills and values. Few traces of those first human residents are still visible today, although a number of very old rock paintings can still be found. The Yai Heki Regional Indian Museum opened in 1985 and was the first of several similar museums to be built by the California State Park System to commemorate the culture and lifestyle of California's diverse Native American population.

The Land

The untended areas of Lake Perris may seem rocky and barren at first glance, but an amazing variety of natural wonders are waiting to be found by those who seek them out. The predominant plant community, coastal sage scrub, is host to a variety of birds and wildlife. Mule deer, bobcats,

coyotes, and rattlesnakes may sometimes be seen by day though they tend to shy away from people. More frequently seen are a wide variety of lizards, rodents, waterfowl, and birds of prey. Beautiful displays of wildflowers occur during the rainy season—generally November through April.

Lake Perris is ringed by various hills and small mountains. The coastal sage scrub community is predominant on the south-facing slopes of the Russell Mountains and Bernasconi Hills and is characterized by shrubby plants including desert encelia, brittlebush, sagebrush, black sage, white sage, buckwheat, and cacti. Conditions are somewhat shadier on hillsides that face north or northwest so that chaparral plants such as chamise, penstemon, and—caution!—poison oak are apt to be found.

Remnants of the original perennial grasses that once flourished in this region can still be found in the flat interior of the park surrounding the lake, but the majority of plants that now make up the valley grassland community (including Russian thistle) were imported from Europe by early settlers. Riparian areas near springs and seeps, and on east and south lakeshores include willows, cattails, elderberry and nettles.

More than a hundred different species of birds have been spotted at Lake Perris. Many are migratory, and stop at the park briefly during their travels, while others make their permanent residence here. Larks, loggerhead shrikes, roadrunners, California thrashers, quail, wrens, sparrows, hummingbirds, golden eagles, several varieties of hawks, ospreys, and even bald eagles may be seen. In addition, many varieties of waterfowl use the lake including pintails, widgeons, teals, mallards, shovellers, various geese, and

sometimes whistling swans and pelicans. Blacknecked stilts, avocets, killdeer, willets, kingfishers, egrets, and herons are attracted to the water's edge.

Day and night, hawks and owls are frequently seen hunting for mice, moles, wood rats, pocket gophers, ground squirrels, kangaroo rats, and other rodents. These animals provide food not only for hawks, owls, and snakes, but also for coyotes, long-tailed weasels, skunks, badgers, and bobcats. The bike trail offers an easy and convenient way to see some of the birds and other wildlife of Lake Perris. Early morning or dusk are the best times. Ranger-led hikes are conducted during the spring and early summer months.

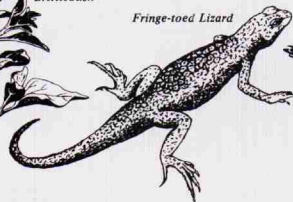
Lake Perris has hot, dry summers and cool, moist winters. Rainy weather is limited almost completely to the months between November and April. The area lies at a crossroads of weather influences. Coastal fog (and smog) comes from the west, while "Santa Anas"—strong, hot, dry winds—come from the deserts to the east and northeast.

Most plants and animals at Lake Perris are well adapted to the hot, dry environment. Chamise leaves are tiny and waxy to minimize water loss due to evaporation. Some grasses and wildflowers rush from bloom to seed in just a few short weeks and are able therefore to complete their life cycle within the brief wet season. Kangaroo rats are so well adapted to dry environments that they seldom drink water, and manage to extract the moisture they need directly from their food.

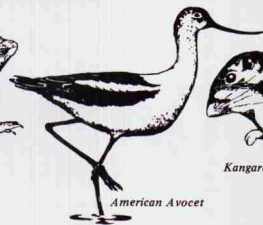
The plants and animals of Perris valley have changed considerably over the last two hundred years due to human activity, but the natural history of this area can still intrigue the observant visitor.



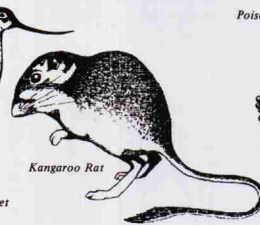
Brittlebush



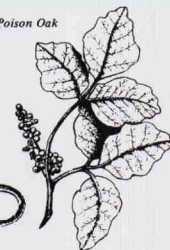
Fringe-toed Lizard



American Avocet



Kangaroo Rat



Poison Oak

Please Help

To make everyone's visit to Lake Perris more enjoyable, remember:

Dogs are permitted only in the campgrounds and picnic areas. They are not allowed on the beaches, in the water, on boats, on trails, in the horse camp, or in park buildings. They must be kept on a leash at all times, and in an enclosed vehicle or tent at night.

Motor vehicles must observe posted speed limits and stay on paved roads; they are not allowed on bicycle or other trails.

Firewood gathering is not allowed. If you didn't bring your own, it is sold at the campground kiosk.

Stay on the trails and watch for rattlesnakes. Horseback riders may use only the trails designated for horses.

Alcoholic beverage consumption can have tragic consequences in a recreation area. Laws governing alcoholic beverage consumption are strictly enforced.

Lake Perris State Recreation Area
17801 Lake Perris Drive
Perris, California 92370
(909) 657-0676

In case of emergency dial 911



State of California • The Resources Agency
Department of Parks & Recreation
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Welcome to

Lake Perris State Recreation Area!

Our goal is to provide the highest quality recreational experience possible. Enjoy your visit.

Boating

Boat launching ramps, with ample parking for boat trailers, are located on the north side of the lake. Sailboats and windsurfers may park and launch in the sail cove area west of lot 1. A concession-operated marina offers boatslips, dry storage, a gas dock, a coffee shop, and boat repair. The marina store carries bait and tackle, boating accessories, camping supplies, and snacks. You can also rent fishing boats, hobie cats, sailboards, jet skis, and paddle boats.



Alessandro Island, a day use, boat-in only area, has picnic tables under shade ramadas; grills are nearby. There's a trail leading to the top of the island where fine views of the area can be enjoyed.

Boats must not exceed five miles per hour within 100 feet of shore. Maximum lake speed is thirty-five miles per hour. All travel on the lake must be counterclockwise.

U.S.C.G. approved personal flotation devices are required on all vessels (including sailboards).

Swimming

You may swim only in the Moreno and Perris Beach areas that are designated by buoys. Lifeguards are on duty in those areas daily during the summer and on weekends in spring and fall. Scuba diving is allowed at Perris Beach. Snack bars at both beaches are open during the summer. A three-flume, concession-operated waterslide is located on the east end of Moreno Beach. It is open daily during the spring and summer and on weekends as weather permits after that.

Fishing

Lake Perris was the first lake in Southern California to be stocked with Alabama spotted bass. Anglers also take planted rainbow trout, channel catfish, and Florida bluegill. Green sunfish were not planted, but arrived with the water from the California aqueduct, along with tiny shrimp from San Francisco Bay that provide food for the gamefish. The lake also has a large population of crayfish or "crawdads."

The best areas to look for catfish are the southwest corner of the dam or the east end of the lake. The cats go for mackerel or nightcrawlers as bait. Look for bass around Alessandro Island and use water-dogs or "crawdads." Trout are taken along the dam and respond to shad. Bluegill like crickets or meal worms and can be taken around the marina or in marshy areas. "Crawdads" may be taken by hand, line, or net. You must, however, be in possession of a valid California fishing license if you are 16 or older. Fishing from boats is usually preferred during the day; all boats must be off the lake by one hour after sunset. Fish-cleaning stations are located throughout the day-use areas. You may fish from shore all night, but vehicles must be out of the day-use parking lots by the posted closing time (10:00 PM in summer; 8:00 PM in winter).

Hunting

In cooperation with the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Fish and Game operates hunting areas for upland game: brush and cottontail rabbits, black-tailed jackrabbits, valley quail, mourning dove, ducks, and geese. Only shotguns may be used in these designated areas; shooting in other areas of the park is prohibited. Hunting information is available at the park kiosks.

Hiking, Bicycling, and Horseback Riding

There is a nine-mile hiking and bicycling trail around the lake. It is paved except for a short stretch at the south end of the dam.

A hiking trail leads to the scenic overlook at Terri Peak. Another trail (accessible to wheelchairs), leads to a spot near the campfire center that offers a fine view of Moreno Pass. Interpretive panels near the campfire center tell the story of the area before Lake Perris was built.

A horse trail circles the lake and goes on into the undeveloped part of the recreation area. Springtime riders find themselves in the midst of a colorful sea of wildflowers.

Volunteers

Lake Perris relies on volunteers to help serve our visitors. If you enjoy helping people, protecting Lake Perris, and would like to volunteer some of your time, please call the park office at (909) 657-0676.

Picnicking

Ramadas, tables, grills, and restrooms (wheelchair accessible) are located at Moreno and Perris Beaches and at the Bernasconi area. Pepper, eucalyptus, cypress, palm, and pine trees have been planted for shade; playground equipment and large grassy areas are available for games.

Three group picnic areas with ramadas, tables, grills, and restrooms (wheelchair accessible) are available, each accommodating up to 200 people. They are located at the east end of the park adjacent to lots 13 and 14. The Bernasconi area has one group picnic area that can accommodate 25-100 people and has tables, grills, water and chemical toilets. Reservations for these facilities can be made at the campground kiosk.

Rock Climbing

A rock-climbing area just south of the dam provides climbers with a variety of challenges and many spectacular views. Climbers may park at the Bernasconi area and take the bicycle trail to Big Rock. The Department of Parks and Recreation does not install or maintain any fixtures or equipment on Big Rock. Climb at your own risk.

Camping

The family campground has 167 sites for tent campers and 264 paved sites for recreational vehicles up to 27 feet long. Each site has a table, grill, and parking for two vehicles. Water and restrooms with hot showers are nearby. These facilities are designed to accommodate wheelchairs. The RV sites have hook-ups for water, electricity, and sink water disposal. There is a trailer sanitation station near the campground entrance.

The group campground has six areas. Each area will accommodate from 25 to 100 people. Each area has shade ramadas, tables, restrooms with hot showers, and a campfire ring. The Bernasconi group campground has three areas that will accommodate 25 to 80 people. These group campgrounds have tables, grills, and chemical toilets.

The primitive horse camp with corrals, watertroughs, picnic tables, campfire rings, drinking water, and chemical toilets will accommodate groups of up to 50 people. It has plenty of parking for vehicles and trailers.

Reservations are recommended throughout the summer season and for spring and fall weekends. Camp and picnic reservations for groups must be made at the campground kiosk. Family campsites can be reserved by calling MIXTIX at 1/800/444-PARK. Checkout time is 2:00 PM daily. Campers who visit during the off-season will be treated to an uncrowded park, beautiful weather, and reduced camping rates.

Regional Indian Museum

Lake Perris Regional Indian Museum, the copper-colored building on your left after you enter through Perris Gate, is the first of several regional Indian museums to be built by the California State Park System. This museum reflects Native American life in the Mojave desert region as experienced by the Cahuilla, Chemehuevi, Cupeno, Luiseno, Serrano, and Vanyume. These people have come to be respected for their highly sophisticated ecological understanding and complex social organization.

The museum describes the Mojave Desert Region Indians of three different time periods. "Adapting to a Desert Homeland" describes life in pre-European contact times. "Surviving a Century of Destruction" presents Hispanic/Anglo colonial background. "Renewing the Heritage" describes Native American experience from the 1920s and '30s to the present.

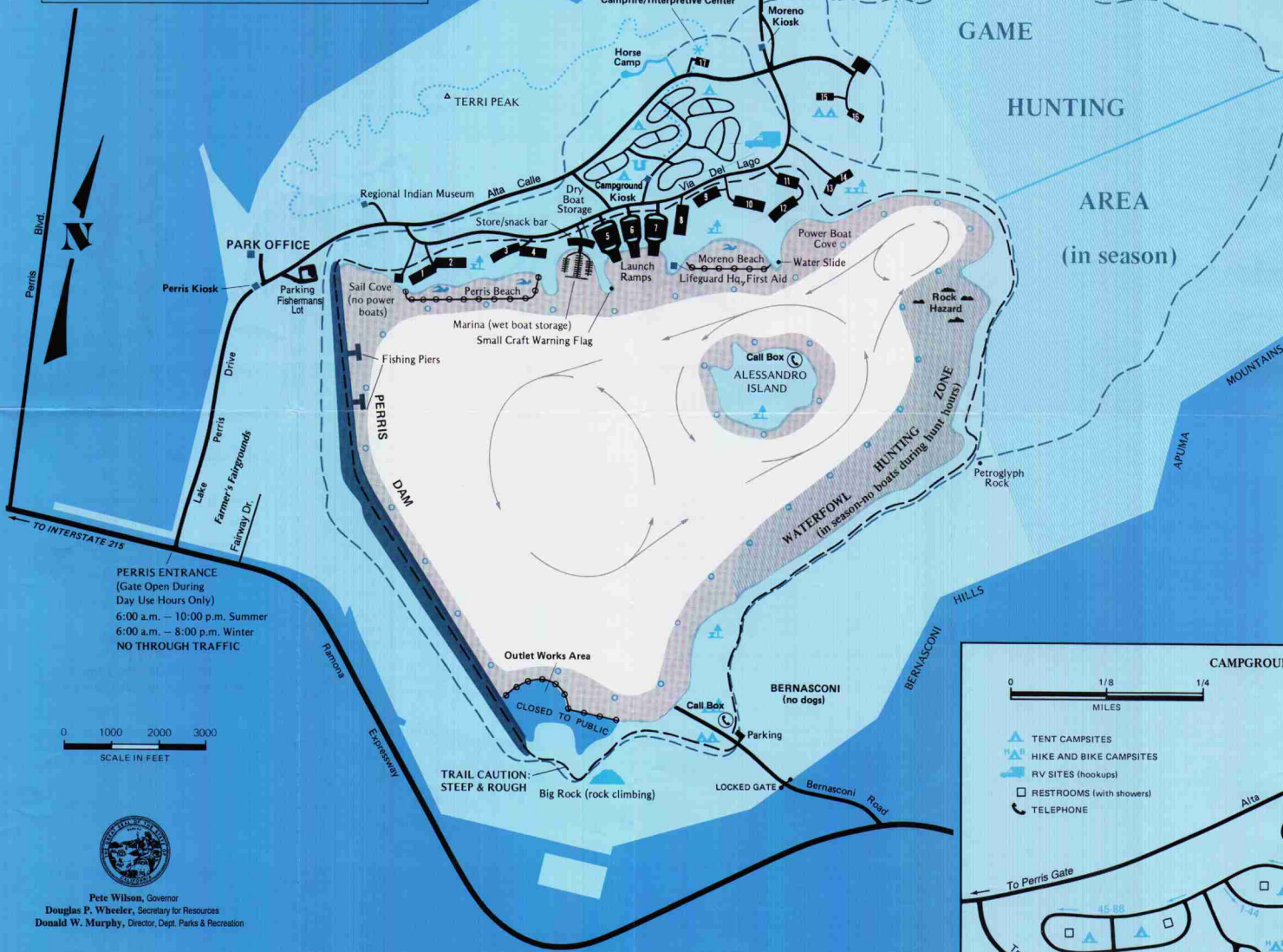
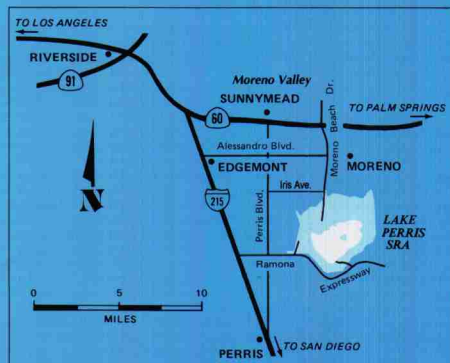
California Indians are the first page in the story of California's cultural heritage. New pages are being written every day. This museum is intended to help everyone enjoy and learn more about the ongoing heritage of California that belongs to all of us.

Interpretation



LAKE PERRIS
Interpretive Association

With the assistance and support of the Lake Perris Interpretive Association, interpretive programs are an ever-increasing aspect of the activities at Lake Perris. Bird and flower walks are held in the spring and early summer months. Campfire programs are held on most summer evenings and there are interpretive hikes, night hikes, bike hikes, fishing clinics, and a variety of other naturalist activities. Junior Ranger programs are offered on a regular basis. Current information about these programs is posted on the park's "activity boards," but please feel free to ask any employee for further information. We want you to enjoy your visit to Lake Perris State Recreation Area!



- PAVED ROADS
- BIKE TRAIL (no vehicles)
- DIRT ROADS
- HORSE TRAILS
- HIKING TRAILS
- PICNIC AREA
- GROUP PICNIC AREA
- GROUP CAMPING
- SWIMMING AREA (no boats-swim in designated areas only)
- 5 MPH BUOY LINE (no wake zone)
- BOAT TRAFFIC DIRECTION
- TRAILER SANITATION STATION
- PARKING LOT NUMBERS

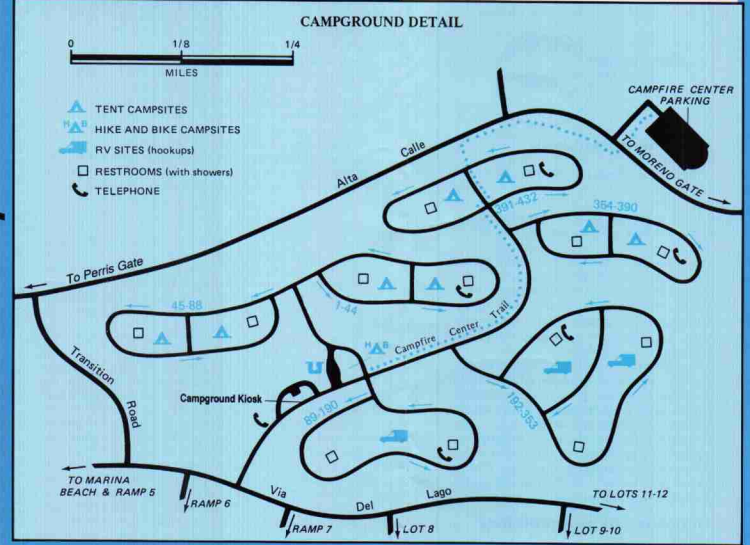
WEATHER ADVISORIES
At selected locations in and near boating areas, storm advisories are displayed by flag hoists or lights. Display points are usually Coast Guard stations, yacht marinas, or municipal piers. A boater should become familiar with the display stations in the area and the meanings of the signals.

Daytime Signals	SMALL CRAFT	GALE	STORM	HURRICANE
	Winds up to 38 mph	Winds up to 54 mph	Winds up to 73 mph	Winds 74 mph and up

0 - 38 mph ADVISORY ONLY (Boaters to use caution, warning only)
The flag is usually posted between 25-38 mph, depending on conditions.

38 - 54 mph GALE WINDS. Windsurfers and other SAILCRAFT allowed. Jet ski's and other vessels with less than six inches of free-board are not allowed. Rental fishing boats fall under this category.

54 mph-up LAKE CLOSURE. No boats, windsurfers, sailboats or jet ski's allowed until lifted. Flag is square with black square in the middle.



Pete Wilson, Governor
Douglas P. Wheeler, Secretary for Resources
Donald W. Murphy, Director, Dept. Parks & Recreation

THE MISSION
of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.